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# The job of looking for a job. How to handle it like a pro.

Are you looking for summer employment? Do you want to work for a year or two before continuing your education? Are you leaving school and looking for a full-time job?

If you answer yes to any one of those questions you are facing the big job of looking for a job.

It's not easy. That's why this booklet was prepared. It contains guidelines, suggestions, ideas and hints to help make the job of looking for your job a little easier.

Read it. Then put it to work for you.



**Ontario  
Youth  
Secretariat**

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## **Looking for a job is a very important project.**

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Treat it like that and you've made the first big step, whether you're looking for your first job or your twenty-first. You can't sit back and wait for luck or connections to get you a job. While those work sometimes, you can't always rely on them. What you can count on is yourself.

The job market today is a tough one. You've got to be able to sell the only commodity you've got – you! And you've got to be able to do it properly. That requires a lot of hard work and a great deal of time. That's why it's important that you start looking for your job right now and in the right way.

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## **So, you want to work.**

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Many people think that once they've made that decision the rest is easy. But there's a very important question you have to answer before you can even get started. The question is simply “*Why do I want to work?*”

Decide what your immediate goals are, as well as your long-term ones. Once you've figured that out, you'll get a much clearer idea of what it is you're looking for.

Not only that, but when you get to the interview stage you can bet someone is going to ask you the very same question. They'll just tack “for us” on the end. It comes in very handy to have an intelligent answer ready.

So ask yourself, “*Why do I want to work?*” And then write your answer down. It makes much more sense when you see it in black and white. And it'll help you give a more honest and helpful answer.

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## First things first.

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The key to good job-hunting is organization. Before you go out in the street with shoes polished and eyes gleaming, you have to do some behind-the-scenes preparation.

### 1. Get a Social Insurance Card.

If you don't already have one, you'll need one. To get it, visit your nearest Canadian Commission of Employment and Immigration office (formerly the Unemployment Insurance Commission).

Bring along two pieces of identification. *Your birth certificate or your certificate of baptism* are the best pieces of identification to bring. The second piece can be a driver's licence. If you don't have a driver's licence, bring along a school report card, club membership card, library card or other similar identification with your name on it. Once you get to the office you'll fill out an application form which will be sent to Ottawa. It takes about four weeks to receive your card, so act now.

NOTE: If you were not born in Canada, be sure to bring along your Canadian Citizenship Card or Immigration 1000 form or your Passport with the landed immigrant stamp.

If you have any questions about your Social Insurance Card, call the Canadian Commission of Employment and Immigration office before you go. They'll be happy to help you and it will save you a lot of time.

### 2. Evaluate yourself.

We mentioned earlier that when you're entering the job market you're selling yourself. Before you can do that you'll need a good idea of what it is you're selling. What will you say to encourage prospective employers to hire you?

To find out, you must take a good, hard look at yourself. The best way is to make a list of everything you are, and are not. It won't be easy. You'll have to be more honest with yourself than you've ever been before. Incidentally, this list is for your use only. You don't have to show it to anyone else, unless you want someone to check your "honesty". Done properly, this list will make the task of writing your résumé much easier.



Here are just a few things you can put on your list to consider:

|   | Strength                 | Disadvantage             |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Age  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Previous job experience                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Temperament or personality                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Health   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Education  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Special accomplishments or skills                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Leadership experience                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Ability to speak or write more than one language       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Period of residence in the country/province/community. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Job stability record                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Hobbies and activities                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Basically, it's a catalogue of things an employer will want to know in order to decide whether or not you'll be an asset to the company. Employers will look upon those items as either strengths or disadvantages. For example, temperament or personality can be either a strength or a disadvantage, depending on what job is being offered. That's why it's so important to be honest with yourself. Employers will look at you very objectively. You must do the same. But keep in mind that being honest doesn't mean putting yourself down.

Let's say, for instance, that you're listing your previous job experience and you've never had what you'd consider a "job" before. But what about the time you looked after someone's house while they were away? Or all the times you babysat or mowed lawns. That was work. And it shows you are willing and able to handle not only the job, but the responsibility. That's a big selling point.

A few words here, too, on skills. It's a word that's often misunderstood by employers as well as job seekers. For your purpose, skills are any ability or abilities you have which could work for you in a job. They could be things you learned through education or experience, or talents you possess.

Okay, you've made your list and honestly appraised your strengths and weaknesses. Now, based on your evaluation, make a list of the jobs you think you could do.

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## How to find out where the jobs are.

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Once you've decided what kind of job you're after you have to go after it. Now you're really getting into the "look" part of looking for a job.

Here, then, are the steps to take in order to actively look for your job. Don't do just one, do them all. You won't be able to apply for a job if you don't know it's there.

### **1. Use your connections.**

Many first-time job seekers may feel embarrassed to use connections or contacts to help them find a job. Don't be. It's a very important link between you and a potential job.

Make a list of all the friends, relatives and neighbours who are working. Approach them all. Tell them what type of work you're looking for and ask if they know of any openings. Get them to check with their friends and acquaintances. Ask permission to use their name in your application letters. And follow all their leads. If you show you really want to work, they'll do all they can to help.

### **2. Visit employment agencies.**

Putting people and jobs together is their business, so use them. Employment agencies include Canada Manpower Centres, your school or college placement centres and any other services that exist in your city or town. Larger urban areas have many private employment agencies, some specializing in specific types of employment. You can find them listed in the Yellow Pages under "Employment Agencies". Remember, going to see their counsellors is just like going for an interview with a prospective employer. Dress and act accordingly. You'll find tips on how to handle face-to-face situations in the Interview section of this booklet.

### **3. Call previous employers**

If you've worked for someone before, give them a call to see if they're hiring and would take you back. If they're not in a position to hire you, tell them what kind of work you're after and ask them to suggest any other contacts you could try. This, of course, will only work well for you if you have worked well for them.



#### **4. Talk to your guidance or placement counsellor.**

If your school doesn't have a placement centre, your counsellor may be able to help you find out where the available jobs are. They could also give you a few tips on how to go after them.

#### **5. Read the Want Ads in the papers every day.**

Read them all. You'll never know what little gems you may find tucked away. Don't be put off by ads requesting experienced help. If you think you can do the job, apply for it. Sometimes ingenuity and enthusiasm can make up for lack of experience. Besides, it doesn't hurt to try.

#### **6. Above all, don't wait.**

As soon as you hear of something, check it out. There are going to be many applicants trying to get that job. Get in there and fight for it.

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## **How to go after the job you want.**

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Now that you've got the idea of where the jobs could be, it's time to apply for them. There's more than one way to apply for a job. The method you use will depend on where you're applying and the circumstances. Let's look at a few:

#### **1. "The organization I want to work for hasn't advertised."**

Well, if the mountain won't come to Mohammed, etc. This is where your connections could be very useful. Write a letter to the company explaining who you are and why you want to work for them. Mention your connection's name. Attach a copy of your résumé. (Letters and résumés are discussed in detail in the next section).

**HINT:** If you don't have a contact and don't know who should receive your letter, send it to the President of the company. You can get the name from the switchboard operator. The President will more than likely route it to the person in charge of the area you wish to work in. You have a much greater chance of having your letter read and acted on, especially if you're sending it early.

**2. "I saw the job I want, advertised in the paper (or on the bulletin board)."**

Again, send a letter and your résumé. Follow the steps outlined in Situation #1 and mention that you're writing in response to the job advertised on such and such a date in such and such a paper. Make sure you address it to the person named in the ad. And send it right away!

**3. "But the place I want to work is in a small store (restaurant, gas station, farm, etc.)."**

Usually the best way to apply for these jobs is to pay them a visit. Explain you're looking for a job. Since this is a face-to-face situation it's important that you present yourself as best you can. Dress neatly and go alone (If a friend wants to work in the same place tell them to see the employer some other time.) Bring a résumé with you and leave it with the prospective employer.

*Be persistent.*

Sometimes the places you approach are not yet in a position to hire. Don't be discouraged. Instead, use it to your advantage. Keep a calendar marked with the names of the businesses you contacted, the date and the person with whom you spoke (or the person to whom you sent your letter.) Mark on the calendar the date they said they'd be hiring. When that day rolls around get in touch with them again. Remind them you applied earlier and when. You can be persistent without being pushy. If they get the idea you really *want* the job your persistence could work in your favour.



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## **Application letters and résumés.**

### **Tools to help you do the job.**

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Before getting into specifics on application letters and résumés, here are a few general hints that could prove useful to you. First, always, always, always TYPE your letters and your résumé. Chances are the people who will be receiving them will also be receiving hundreds of others. They simply do not have the time to decipher illegible writing. So they won't. And all the time you spend getting your material together will be wasted. Centre the letter and résumé neatly on the page and make sure it's properly spaced. If you can't type, pay someone to do it for you. It's only a small investment, but well worth it. Secondly, a little originality can go a long way. Especially if you're sending your letter and résumé to a big company. One idea is to put your résumé in a coloured folder. It'll stand out from the rest. But temper your originality with common sense and neatness. (Dayglo drawings, for example, are out.)

Use a copying machine at school or at the library to make photocopies of your résumé. It's not addressed to any specific person, so it's quite acceptable to send a copy. Always send an original application letter. This must be done specifically for the person to whom you're sending your letter.

Okay, let's get down to a few specific guidelines. Your application letter and résumé are pictures of you. They are often your first contact with prospective employers. Take the time to do them properly. There are books in your public library that deal with letters and résumés. Use them when you're preparing yours. Or ask a teacher or guidance counsellor to help you.

Your letter will be one of two kinds. The first kind is a general application letter. The second is in reply to a specific vacancy, which you became aware of through your contact or in a job ad.



## Here's the format for a business letter:

Your address,  
Date

Name of person to whom you're writing,  
Position of that person,  
Name of Company  
Address

Dear (name of person): (or Dear Sir/Madam):

First paragraph: State your course, school and grade or year. In a general application letter briefly outline the type of work you're looking for. If applying for a specific job refer to the position and how you heard of it.

Second paragraph: In a general application letter mention one or two qualifications which apply to the type of work you're looking for. In a specific application letter state your most important qualifications for the job. In both cases sum up the paragraph with a line explaining why you want to work for that particular company.

Third paragraph: Refer to your enclosed résumé. Encourage the employer to respond to your letter. For example, request an interview or say you're looking forward to hearing from them.

Sincerely, (Sincerely yours or Yours Truly)

Your Name

Keep it simple, clear and concise. It's meant to be an introduction to your résumé so you don't have to get into detailed specifics of your experience and education. But you do have to get across the idea that you want to work for this company. A well-written letter can also make up for a weak résumé, especially if you have not had much job experience.

Always address your application letter to a specific person. If you don't know who that person is, the switchboard operator at the company can give you the name and title. (Make sure you've got the correct spelling). That way, you'll be sure your letter reaches the right person as soon as possible.

Your résumé is a detailed profile of you. It's absolutely necessary if you seriously want a job with any company. You should send one with every letter and take one with you to every interview. The sample résumé will show you how to prepare yours. Potential employers will use your résumé to get information about how you will fit in and work for them. So include the following facts:

1. Your name, address, postal code, telephone number
  2. PERSONAL DATA: Age and birthdate
  3. EDUCATION: State what school you attend, (have graduated from, are graduating from). Include a general reference to your marks. If you've ever won any scholastic awards or scholarships mention them, explaining why you received them.
  4. WORK EXPERIENCE: Again, be brief. Outline any (and, if you think necessary, *all*) jobs you have held. State the year, the position and the place. If you received a raise or promotion while you were employed for someone, mention that too. And if you've never had a job with a business before, don't worry. Include anything you ever did to make money.
  5. ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS: Include any clubs, organizations etc. with which you are involved. An employer can tell a great deal about you from the things you like to do. And when two applicants have a very similar background in other things (like education and experience) your interests could tip the scales in your favour.
  6. OCCUPATIONAL GOAL: This is optional. If you have specific career goals that relate to the type of work you're applying for now, it would be to your advantage to mention them briefly.
  7. REFERENCES: An employer won't always require references, but it's a good idea to include them in your résumé. Then you have them if you need them. Put in one business reference and a personal one. Teachers and former employers are best. Always get permission from the people you wish to list. And when you've sent your résumés out, tell your references who may be calling them.
- NOTE: Relatives do not count as references, no matter who they are.

## SAMPLE RÉSUMÉ

Jane Doe  
23 Markham St.  
Toronto, Ontario  
M6J 2G3

Birthdate: July 10/55  
Marital Status: Single  
Height: 5 ft. 4 in.  
Weight: 106 lbs.

### EDUCATION

1975-present Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, Toronto Journalism  
Major Courses: Copywriting, Copyediting, Newspaper Layout, Photography, plus academic courses. (Average Grade 4 out of 5)

1969-1974 Glendale Secondary School  
Five Year Academic  
Major Courses: English, French, History  
(Average Grade: 72%)

### EXPERIENCE

May '77- T. Eaton Company Limited – Sales Clerk, full-time  
Sept. '77 summer employment – Serving customers.

May '76- Clearwater Girl's Camp – Counsellor – Supervising  
Sept. '76 a group of ten campers age 8 to 10 years.

Dec. '73- Zellers Stores – Sales Clerk, part-time 14 hours/  
Sept. '75 week during school year and full-time during  
summer months May-Sept. Serving customers,  
stock control, re-ordering etc.

### ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS

Reporter for Student Union Newspaper, Markham Street  
Community Theatre, Photography, Reading, Hiking.

### REFERENCES

Mr. Andrew Wright  
Copyediting Instructor  
Ryerson Polytechnical Institute  
Toronto, Ontario

Mrs. Roberta Gray  
Co-ordinator,  
Markham Street Community  
Theatre,  
37 Markham St., Toronto

**HINTS:** Play up your strong points. Don't volunteer any negative information. Sometimes your weak areas can be overlooked when you present yourself in an interview. Don't lie. It won't get you anywhere and it could cost you the job.

To sum up, application letters and résumés are quite simple to do, providing you follow a plan and use common sense and honesty. All you have to do now is sit down and write them.



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## **The Interview**

### **How to make the most of it.**

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Many people spend a great deal of time and trouble getting to the interview stage and once there, react like the dog that caught the car. They're not exactly sure what to do with it. If you're properly prepared (and if you followed all the steps so far, there's not much left to do) the interview can work for you. Here are the steps you should take to make the most of yourself in an interview.

#### **1. Schedule as many as you can.**

The more often you go, the easier it gets. If there's a particular job you really want, try and schedule a few other interviews before that one. By the time you get to it you'll feel more confident. But don't leave it too long or you may miss the job.

#### **2. Get the correct name and address.**

Call the day before your interview and just double check to make sure you have it right. If you're not sure how to get there ask for directions. And while you're at it, check your appointment time and the name of the person you're to see.

#### **3. Give yourself plenty of time to get there.**

The worst thing you could do is show up late. So leave for your interview in good time to get there. It doesn't hurt to arrive early.

#### **4. Know something about the business.**

Find out a few basic facts like what they do and how long they've been in business. Your guidance counsellor or placement office can help there. Or, if the company is a large one, check them out in the reference library. It'll show you're interested and will give you something to talk to your interviewer about.

#### **5. Look neat.**

There's no way around it. First impressions are very important. Manufacturers package goods attractively to help sell them and you have to present yourself in the same way. If you look neat and clean you give the impression that that's how you'll work. Besides, if you know you look okay, you'll feel okay. And that gives you one less thing to worry about.

## **6. Expect to fill out an application form.**

This could happen before you meet your interviewer or after. Many companies have standard application forms. So, even if they already have your letter and résumé, they'll ask you to fill one out. Use the information from your résumé and make sure you bring your Social Insurance Card. Complete the application neatly. If there's something you're not sure about, ask your interviewer to explain.

## **7. Address your interviewer by name.**

You know it. Use it. When you first enter the room say something like "Good afternoon Mr. (Miss Mrs. Ms.) Smith. Thank you very much for taking the time to see me."

## **8. Be prepared for the unexpected.**

Many interviewers like to ask questions like "Tell me about yourself." It can really throw you off balance. That's why it's handy to have your résumé with you. Take this opportunity to elaborate on the information in your résumé and to stress your strong points.

Just keep your cool and you'll do okay.

## **9. Talk to your interviewer.**

They're interested in what you have to say. If not, you wouldn't be there. Don't interrupt, but keep the conversational ball rolling. This is where your research on the company will show up. For example: "I understand this company began only ten years ago with five employees and now you employ over a hundred people. It must be very interesting to work for such an expanding operation." It looks pretty mundane when you read it, but it'll make *you* look interested, and interesting.

## **10. Be enthusiastic.**

You don't have to come on like a tornado but make it clear that you really want the job. Your enthusiasm will come through if you follow the first nine steps. And it should. If you're not enthusiastic about getting the job, you can't expect anyone to be enthusiastic about giving it to you.

## **11. Say thank you.**

When the interview is over, thank your interviewer again for taking the time to see you. When you get home, write a quick note of appreciation. It could go like this:

Dear Mr. (Miss, Mrs. Ms.) Smith

Thank you very much for taking the time to see me today.

I know you must be very busy and I appreciated the opportunity to talk with you. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,  
(your name)

The above example is just a guideline. Your note should fit the circumstances.

This small act of common courtesy is one of the most important things you can do when looking for a job, yet nearly everyone overlooks it. Remember, it could very well get you the job.

While we're on the subject of courtesy, also remember to be polite to everyone you meet when you visit a potential employer, no matter who they are or what they do. You'll be amazed at how often the impression you leave with the receptionist or the interviewer's secretary can be as important as the one you leave with the interviewer.

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## **How to make your job work for you.**

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You are going to work very hard to get your job, so when you get it, work just as hard to keep it. It may not be exactly what you dreamed of getting when you first set out, but any job you work at will give you more of a very marketable commodity... experience. You're going to learn something from it; especially if you try a little harder. You can compare job experience to a patchwork quilt. The pieces may not look like they'll go together, but when you stand back and look at it you'll see a pattern emerge. Each job will be distinctive from the others, but they will all fit together to complete the picture you'll present to future employers. Any job can work for you, now and later on.



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## Be your own boss.

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If you're not able to find a job, think about creating your own employment. Sure, it's a challenge, but it could be very rewarding financially and as a means of gaining work experience.

There are many types of self-employment available to you. You can babysit, cut lawns, wash cars, paint houses and more. Those are ways of making money by providing services for people who don't have the time to do those things for themselves. Once you've decided what you want to do, advertise your service. Put a notice on your supermarket bulletin board. Canvas the neighbourhood door-to-door. Take an ad out in the newspapers.

You can also consider developing your own little business by doing something you're very good at. For example, you could do carpentry work, dress-making, baking, landscaping etc.

To find out what's involved in starting your own business you can call your bank manager for information on techniques of setting it up and running it efficiently. You can also call your local Junior Achievement Office. The people there will be happy to give you advice and answer any questions you may have.

Try it and see what happens. If you've used imagination and a little ingenuity the results may pleasantly surprise you.

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## Everything you should be doing.

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Use this checklist to make sure you're doing everything possible to look for your job.

- ☐ Read this booklet thoroughly.
- ☐ Get your Social Insurance Card.
- ☐ Make your self-evaluation list.
- ☐ Make a list of the jobs you can do, and the companies where you can do them.
- ☐ Tell every working person you know that you're looking for a job.
- ☐ Visit your local employment agencies.
- ☐ Read the newspaper want ads, every day.
- ☐ Prepare your application letters and résumé.
- ☐ Send letters or pay a visit to every place you want to work.
- ☐ Follow up your letters with a "did you receive it" phone call.
- ☐ Prepare your job-hunt calendar and keep it up to date.
- ☐ Prepare yourself thoroughly for your interviews.
- ☐ After an interview, send a Thank-you note.



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# Ontario Youth Secretariat

This provincial government secretariat is your voice at Queen's Park. We have prepared this booklet to help you look for your job. If you pick up any extra tips about looking for and finding a job, we'd like to hear about them.



Ontario

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Honourable Margaret Birch  
Provincial Secretary  
For Social Development